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Noua ... corpora: New Bodies and Gendered Patterns in the Metamorphoses

Alison Sharrock

‘We will argue that, even in the realm of seemingly unconstrained fantasy, not everything is equally likely. In fantasy, any transformation of one kind into another can be imagined. Still, some transformations may be favored over others as they adapt to, and hence reflect, properties of conceptual structure.’

Kelly and Keil (1985) 404

- 1 Tales of metamorphosis are stories of similarity and affinity as much as they are about change and alterity. Metamorphic continuity is well established as a feature of the Ovidian world, from the ferocity of Lycaon-wolf to the beauty of Daphne-laurel and the weaving of Arachne-spider, with readers across time and space in very different cultures nonetheless all perceiving the fit of metamorphic outcome.¹ A metamorphosis-story which is also an aetion achieves its sense of ending precisely by the connection between issue and outcome.² The resulting comfort and sense of appropriateness generated in the reader, however, may be deeply at odds with the experience of the character, for whom, in Ovid’s poem, metamorphosis (except in the special case of apotheosis) is almost always a painful and limiting experience which leaves its victim, not in a state of satisfied closure, but of eternal stasis and ongoing suffering. The continuity which the reader perceives between the pre- and post-metamorphic states is, for the metamorphosed, a disruptive intrusion into her or his personal story. The poem as a whole, I suggest, explores this tension between readerly satisfaction and subjective disruption, both empathising with suffering and also exposing the psychological and societal structures which create the conditions for this satisfaction-disruption. Among those structures there are few more powerful than the edifices of gender.

- 2 I have argued elsewhere that – contrary to what one might expect – there is a strong preference for continuity of biological and psychological sex/gender in Ovidian metamorphosis.³ While everything else may be transformed for ‘forms changed into new bodies’, gender remains static, except in those cases where it is the *only* change to occur. Metamorphosis seems to be gendered also in the depth of focalisation offered to the reader through a character in the very process of change: it is, predominantly and disproportionately, *female* characters whose moment of metamorphosis becomes the focus for readerly engagement.⁴ This discovery raised for me the question of whether there is any gendered preference in metamorphic destination. As my opening epigram suggests, central to my interests in this paper is the question of how the fantasy of bodily transformation is constrained by expectations arising out of perceived or subconscious affinities. My impression in response to this question is that there is not a fixed schema which would routinely or always cause females to turn into certain nonhumans and males into other ones, but that there are some patterns which are significant.⁵ I shall therefore consider in this paper several of the major metamorphic destinations: trees, watercourses, stones and related inorganic substances, gods, animals, and birds. I attempt to show that metamorphic destination is heavily gender-determined for trees, and gender-significant, though not straightforwardly determined, for watercourses, gods, and stones, with gender-equality being most visible in the case of birds and other animals. In that last case, it may be that we need to be surprised not so much that around half of victims are female, but rather that half of victims are male, given the gender-imbalances in the other kinds of outcome. While this study cannot be comprehensive, I hope it is sufficiently extensive to indicate the wider relevance of gender in the study of metamorphosis in the *Metamorphoses*.

Trees

- 3 Some of the most memorable metamorphic moments of the poem involve transformation into trees. There is a strong perceptual and linguistic connection between humans and trees in ancient (and not so ancient) thought, including some evidence for an ancient Greek belief in the origin of humankind from trees.⁶ This ‘natural’ connection between leaves and hair, branches and arms, trunks and trunks, etc., is regularly exploited by Ovid in descriptions of metamorphosis.⁷ It is not, however, the neutral human body which displays and is made to enact this dendro-corporeality in the poem, but rather specifically the female human body. As I shall describe further below, most of the tree-transformations of the *Metamorphoses* are of female beings, human or nymph. I begin my analysis of the Ovidian connection between women and trees by exploring just one of many post-ancient responses to it. I hope that this brief discussion can stand as a representative of the ways in which the *Metamorphoses* has contributed to the normative representation of a connection between women and trees.
- 4 The American poet Carol Muske-Dukes, in a poem entitled DAPHNE, AFTER and published in *The New Yorker*, 1 April 2019, draws on the long tradition of symbolic identification between girls and trees, spring and youth.⁸ I quote the poem here in full, for the reader’s convenience.

So Spring blossomed in spite of itself.
 Uniform skirts up-rolled high by wild girls
 curbside, smoking. Still, two of us, heads
 together, translating. Our selves as Stoic
 teens, thinking Marcus, Marcus A.
 So: month of rose pagodas, of lilacs
 impetuous, blue. Twigs spill from
 her dropped text, as she flees
 translation class, the nun's query.
 He demanded her name first. Just
 steps from the bus stop. Sunset:
 shade before ancient dark. Blossoms
 beneath her, beneath the shock-light of
 staggered street lamps coming on. Leda's
 Zeus, his suit & tie, swan's hiss in her ear.
 She told me only. The great wings of
 aloneness closed in us, we learned how
 the passive voice was magnified: "The soul
 is dyed with the color of its thoughts."
 Powerless to move, she became past
 tense of strength once standing tall
 at her father's grave. His name in brass
 florets. But Latin offhand—"to seize or
 abduct." Ovid's shudder: *Vos mos non
 sit sponsa . . .* Once we might have found it
 funny: You will not be a bride, you will be
 a tree. At each ring where her flesh became
 bark, a path opened: root split. Some
 believe that anger can take the place of
 love. She found the verb for it. Having to
 do with the forest & a young girl running fast,
 calling out—then silence. Becoming as she
 had, one of them, reaching skyward. Their
 witness, bowing. Those wings hidden in
 the tree, meaning she was not ready to be
 cut down, not ready to be chopped into little
 sticks & tossed into fire's assumed supremacy—
 all that smoke, her ashes refusing to fly.

- 5 In a modern, feminist twist on the age-old story of blossoming and defloration, the girls are not just flowers waiting to be plucked but rather start out as promising scholars, philosophers, translators, students, controlling texts rather than objectified as texts.⁹ Metamorphosis lurks proleptically already in the third stanza, when 'twigs spill' from the truanting student, the Daphne of this poem. A sexualised encounter at a bus stop intrudes violently ('demanded', 'shock-light', 'swan's hiss'), with rape implied both through the image of Zeus and Leda and through the verb *rapere* – not stated but only translated ('to seize or abduct'). Latin grammar and sexual violence are confounded in stanza 6 as 'Daphne' and the narrator 'learned how/the passive voice was magnified'. The Ovidian Daphne-story is again foreshadowed/reflected with the loss of movement ('powerless to move'), which was the very manner in which Ovid's Daphne first sensed the supposed rescue for which she prayed to her father. At this point, Ovid enters the poem directly to enact the metamorphosis, although it is perhaps a schoolgirl version of the poet. The Latin quotation straddling the eighth and ninth stanzas is not exactly anything from the ancient poet, nor is it, as far as I can tell, directly translatable.¹⁰ It is

perhaps a garbled retranslation of *Met.* 1. 557-8, '*at quoniam coniunx mea non potes esse,/ arbor eris certe*' dixit '*mea...*', translated back into English as what would, before the rape, have seemed to the girls like a joke – 'you will not be a bride, you will be/a tree'. Transformation proper then takes over, when, as 'her flesh became/bark', Daphne follows the Ovidian path. I am not sure what to make of what happens 'after', although the poem's title shows that 'after' is important – after rape, after Ovid, after transformation.¹¹ The tree becomes tall ('reaching skyward'), and is perhaps the recipient of adoration ('Their/witness, bowing.') but is this personal growth that reaches for the sky (metaphorical) or objectification (literal) – in which the aesthetics and the symbolism of the laurel's association with victory come at the cost of Daphne's agency? Finally, there seems to be a bird in this Daphne-tree, whether that is pregnancy caused by the Zeus-swan of the fifth stanza or a metaphorical symbol of hope and the power of trees to provide homes for many other natural things, a biblical image picked up also by Brontë, when Jane answers Rochester's depiction of himself as the lightning-blasted tree by re-inscribing him as a shelter for the birds of the air. I do not know what to make of Muske-Dukes' Daphne's final refusal to be chopped into firewood (picking up the twigs of the third stanza) and to fly away as ashes in the breeze, but her ongoing consciousness and refusal to be controlled answers Ovid's Daphne's ambiguous nod.

- 6 Muske-Dukes is responding to a connection between women and trees which is deep in European mythology and for which Ovid's poem is one of the most powerful vectors.¹² A simple illustration of the connection can be seen in the following way: search for 'women and trees' in Google and you will see many images which are undeniably beautiful and at least some of which could be regarded as positive representations of female associations with life (to oversimplify, in the tradition of second-wave feminism) but which also risk objectifying the female body. Search for 'men and trees', on the other hand, and most of what you find is examples of the debilitating and disfiguring viral illness causing warty growths, particularly on the hands and feet, which appear to be turning the victim into a tree. Other images mostly represent not neutral or beautiful men but jokey caricatures, together with one or two Ent-like images and a few men with chainsaws. Such is the culture into which Muske-Dukes inserts her response to Ovid. If – as I think – her poem also resists the implications of that connection, it can only do so because the association manifests itself so powerfully in the European tradition, with Ovid as its strongest creative ancestor. Nymphs have a strong affinity with all things vegetative, especially trees, as is epitomised by the tradition of hamadryads, nymphs whose existence is intimately connected with (*hama-*, 'at the same time as') their trees.¹³ European art has immortalised the connection, none more so than the much-reproduced Daphne of Bernini, where it would be hard to say whether it is the poem of Ovid and the classical culture it represents or the aestheticizing objectification of the female body which is captured, immobilised, immortalised, and presented for the viewer's delectation.
- 7 The connection between women and trees is perceptible in the very grammar of Latin, in that both the generic term *arbor* and most species-names for trees are of feminine gender. We do not need to rely only on the ground-breaking work of Corbeill on grammatical and biological gender, to register literary-critical notice of the feminine gender of tree names, since core texts of modern Latin philology also remark on the phenomenon interpretatively, explaining the feminine gender of tree names as arising

from the conception of them as mothers to the fruit (which is neuter).¹⁴ It is particularly pleasing (at least to modern readers) that this connection between women and trees should be additionally marked by the fact that most tree names are second declension feminine nouns, and indeed the vast majority of the small number of second declension nouns which are grammatically feminine are trees.¹⁵ It is surely not the case that the grammatically feminine gender of those trees is straightforwardly the *reason* why Ovid turns women into trees, but rather, I suggest, that the grammatical gender and the symbolic affinity of women and trees are bound up both in each other and in the games Ovid plays with continuity and difference in metamorphosis, as we can see in this passage from the end of the Daphne episode.

ora cacumen habet; remanet nitor unus in illa.
hanc quoque Phoebus amat, positaque in stipite dextra
sentit adhuc trepidare nouo sub cortice pectus,
complexusque suis ramos, ut membra, lacertis 555
oscula dat ligno; refugit tamen oscula lignum.
cui deus 'at quoniam coniunx mea non potes esse,
arbor eris certe' dixit 'mea; semper habebunt
te coma, te citharae, te nostrae, laure, pharetrae...'

Met. 1.552–9

The treetop holds her face: only/one brightness/beauty remains in her. This one also Phoebus loves and, with his right hand placed on the wood, he feels the breast still fluttering beneath the new bark, and embracing the branches, as if limbs, with his arms, he gives kisses to the wood: yet the wood shrinks back from the kisses. To it/her the god said, "but since you cannot be my wife, you will certainly be my tree. My hair will always have you, you my lyres, you my quivers. ..."

- 8 We should note the feminine gender of *illa/ hanc* (552-3), remaining feminine even after the metamorphosis, as is emphasised by the echo of *coniunx mea* in *arbor...mea* (557-8).
- 9 *Daphne* perhaps deserves to be called the iconic story, in the proper sense of that overused adjective, of Ovid's epic, not only so often chosen as its graphical representation but also rendered programmatic as the first erotic tale of the *metAMORphoses* (of many), the first – albeit failed (or not) – rape scene (again, of many). She is also first among many women-trees. Others are the Heliades, the sisters of Phaethon who are transformed into poplars while they mourn for their blasted brother (*Met.* 2.340-66); Baucis, transformed along with her husband in a rare case of metamorphosis presented clearly as reward (*Met.* 8.711-24); Dryope and Lotis, an unusual case of apparently infectious metamorphosis, in this case into the Lotus tree (*Met.* 9.324-93);¹⁶ Myrrha, another powerfully emotive story of continuity, in which the transformed myrrh-tree gives birth in human labouring agony (*Met.* 10.503-18);¹⁷ and the Thracian women held responsible by Bacchus for the death of Orpheus (*Met.* 11.67-84). In all these cases, with the exception of Baucis, the poem lingers over the process of transformation and the suffering of the victim specifically in that process.¹⁸
- 10 By comparison with the characters delineated in the previous paragraph, the male victims of dendrification are few, briefly told, and all exceptional in a number of ways (two are beloved boys, one is an old man and part of a couple, and the last one is a bit special in a way I shall describe below). I suggest that it is significant that almost all transformed trees in the poem are originally female beings (humans or nymphs), while the only male characters to be transformed into trees are all sufficiently exceptional as not to destabilise the specific connection between females and trees, and moreover are none of them the subject of extensive readerly identification in the process of

metamorphosis. In support of my argument that the connection between trees and femininity is substantial, I shall now briefly discuss all the cases of male characters who become trees.

- 11 Cyparissus (*Met.* 10.106-42), metamorphosed into the cypress which joins the crowd of trees listening to the song of Orpheus, is a beloved boy (*puer*, 10.107, 130), rather than a man, as is another boy-tree who joins the gang, Attis the pine tree, to whose story brief allusion is made just before that of Cyparissus. Cyparissus, the beloved of Apollo, accidentally kills his pet stag and prays to be able to grieve for it forever (10.135), a prayer answered by the gods and immortalised by his lover as the epitome of the funereal tree. The story of the cypress is well suited to its narrator, Orpheus, since it expresses grief and guilt at the loss of a beloved, an association with death, and a replacement of one type of love object with another – Ovid presents Orpheus as responding to the loss of his wife by diverting his interest into boys (10.83-5), while the relationship between Cyparissus and the stag seems to contain some of the erotic-object displacement with which Orpheus is also concerned. It is widely accepted that the representation of a beloved boy has considerable overlap with that of a woman or girl, since both are situated on the other side of the opposition between the adult male citizen and everyone else.
- 12 The fact that Attis is the beloved of a goddess, rather than a god, does not remove him from the category of ‘beloved boy’, since when goddesses court mortal men (even adult men) in Graeco-Roman mythography, they follow many of the patterns of older men pursuing boys.¹⁹ Gender-disruption is especially relevant to Attis, given his ambiguously gendered name and his particular history, and is something with which Ovid plays in his brief account of the pine tree among Orpheus’ audience.²⁰

et succincta comas hirsutaque uertice pinus,
grata deum Matri; siquidem Cybeleius Attis
exuit hac hominem truncoque induruit illo.
Met. 10.103-5

... And the pine tree with her girdled foliage and bristling top, pleasing to the Mother of the gods; if indeed Cybele’s boy Attis threw off humanity/manhood here and grew hard in that trunk.

- 13 The pine is described as *succincta*, *hirsuta*, and *grata* (feminine adjectives) to the mother of the gods, in the same line as the explanation (slightly undermined or distanced by the introductory word *siquidem*) that this is the result of *Cybeleius Attis* (i.e., masculine adjective) turning into the pine tree (10.103-5). This might be a rare case where we can perceive an actual change of gender in the moment of metamorphosis (i.e. apart from those cases where the metamorphosis is precisely of gender), since Attis *exuit hac hominem*, ‘cast off the man/human with/in it’. The ironies are many. At the surface level, *hominem* must surely mean ‘human’ rather than ‘male person’ or (adult) ‘man’ (for both of which *uirum* would be the natural word), but the unusual terminology, together with the masculine and feminine adjectives in the same line, must also offer a hint at the way Catullus 63 dealt with the story of Attis.

stimulatus ibi furenti rabie, vagus animis,
de volsit ili acuto sibi pondera silice,
itaque ut relictis sensit sibi membra sine viro...
Cat. 63. 3-6

...there, stimulated by raging madness, wondering in mind, he tore off the burden of his groin with sharp flint, and so when he realised that his limbs had been left without manhood...

- 14 There, notoriously, the boy's self-castration (perhaps also hinted at in *exuit...hominem?*) caused the textual description to swap feminine adjectives for the masculine ones to which, by the peculiar ancient masculinist logic, he is no longer entitled after his castration.²¹
- 15 At the other end of the chronological scale is Philemon, turned into a tree along with his wife Baucis as a reward for their lives of piety and for welcoming the disguised gods Jupiter and Mercury (*Met.* 8.618-724) – narrated by the pious Lelex. His case does not destabilise the normative connection between trees and the feminine, I suggest, partly because he is in extreme old age (he and Baucis were already old when the gods first visited them, several years before the metamorphosis takes place) and partly because it belongs to a subset of metamorphoses, in which shared metamorphosis of husband and wife can be an expression of devotion.²² It is most clearly so in the case of Baucis and Philemon, for whom the metamorphosis is most obviously (and unusually) a version of death at its natural time,²³ but some similarities can be seen in Ceyx and Alcyone (who become 'halcyon birds' and thus, unusually, the same species), whose metamorphosis after the apparent untimely death of Ceyx at sea allows them to continue their married life, even to the extent of reproduction (11.741-6). Alongside these two couples I would add other cases of marital metamorphoses: Cadmus and Harmonia into snakes, Olenus and Lethaea to stone,²⁴ Periphas and Phene to birds.²⁵
- 16 There is, moreover, a further interesting point to note about Baucis and Philemon, apropos grammatical and biological gender. The conjoined trees with which the narrator Lelex opens his story are described in this way: *tiliae contermina quercus/collibus est Phrygiis medio circumdata muro* ('there is in the Phrygian hills an oak, right next to a lime-tree, surrounded by a wall', 8.620-1). Both trees are of course grammatically feminine, it being the oak which, as subject, is the one also feminised by the past participle. There is nothing in the text to say which tree is Baucis and which is Philemon, but commentators overwhelmingly assume that the oak is the husband.²⁶ I presume that this is primarily because an oak is paradigmatic for a strong and powerful tree, but it might also arise from the way in which the oak, as the subject of the sentence, seems to take priority in the image (even though the lime is mentioned first), even possibly with a hint that it is protectively embracing the other tree.²⁷ While I would indeed accuse commentators of unconscious bias in the gendered identification of the trees, formally unstated in the text, I suspect that commentators are additionally responding to something subliminal in the text, which implies predominance for the oak and the concomitant assumption that predominance designates male gender. Ovid, or Lelex, perhaps accidentally, hints that he perceives Philemon in the oak, as the 'stronger sex', and therefore the commentators' unconscious bias extends to the narrator also.
- 17 The one remaining example I can find of a male person being metamorphosed into a tree is the case of the Apulian shepherd, who imitated the nymphs' dancing and was turned by them into a wild olive tree (*oleaster*). I note first that this word is masculine in grammatical gender, whereas the cultivated *olea* is feminine.²⁸ The context is a brief interlude in Ovid's games with following the *Aeneid*, when on Venulus' (rather roundabout) return journey from his abortive mission to Diomedes, he passes through Messapia. Incidentally to this journey, the narrator tells this rather poetologically intriguing story about a group of nymphs who had been driven from a cave which is now occupied by Pan, and had subsequently been mocked by the shepherd.²⁹

Apulus has illa pastor regione fugatas
 terruit et primo subita formidine mouit;
 mox, ubi mens rediit et contempsere sequentem,
 ad numerum motis pedibus duxere choreas. 520
 improbat has pastor saltuque imitatus agresti
 addidit obscenis conuicia rustica dictis,
 nec prius obticuit quam guttura condidit arbor.
 arbor enim est, sucoque licet cognoscere mores.
 quippe notam linguae baxis oleaster amaris 525
 exhibet; asperitas uerborum cessit in illas.
 Met. 14.517-26

An Apulian shepherd terrified them [the nymphs] when they had been put to flight from this place and first of all moved them with sudden fear; but soon, when their reason returned and they scorned the stalker, they began to dance, moving their feet in time to the music. The shepherd mocked them and imitating them with rustic jumping added crude insults to obscene words, and didn't shut up until his throat was shut up in the tree. For he is a tree and you can recognise his behaviour from its juice, inasmuch as the wild olive displays the mark of his tongue with its bitter berries; all the harshness of his words has been channelled into them.

- 18 I would suggest that this near-unique male tree is a metapoetic version of 'Ovid', the poet, working here in the ironic tradition of Thersites, Hipponax, and Arachne, as a bumpkin who dares to imitate epic.

Stones, water, and gods

- 19 Solid inorganic substances constitute a metamorphic destination which, as with trees, generally freezes the victim and removes his/her agency. In absolute numbers, male victims pre-dominate, but that is only because of the 200 statues produced by Perseus, wielding Medusa's head as a weapon of mass destruction when trouble breaks out at his wedding banquet.³⁰ Of those, only a maximum of three receive any attention, with Aconteus and Astyages described in six lines (5.201-6), before the poet self-consciously refuses to give us a catalogue.

nomina longa mora est media de plebe uirorum
 dicere; bis centum restabant corpora pugnae,
 Gorgone bis centum riguerunt corpora uisa.
 Met. 5.207-9

it would take too long to catalogue the names of the men from among the people;
 200 bodies remained for the fight, 200 bodies grew hard at the sight of the Gorgon.

- 20 I suggest that the *media de plebe* may be a telling phrase. Among the other male victims of lithification in the poem, almost all are in some way lowly or suppressed.³¹ There is Lichas, the luckless bearer of the poisoned cloak to Hercules (9.214-29); the talkative yokel Battus, who makes the mistake of promising silence to Mercury by saying that a stone will speak first (2.696), with predictable result (2.705-7)³²; and the shepherd who is unlucky enough to be asked to resolve a dispute among the gods regarding Ambracia, for which he is turned to stone by one of the losers (13.713-15).³³ Two others are among the stories passed over by Alcithoe: Daphnis, turned to stone by an angry nymph (4.276-8), and Celmis, a servant of Jupiter turned to adamant in punishment for some disloyalty (4.281-2), while equally brief is the account of the couple Olenus and Lethaea (10.68-71), mentioned above.³⁴ The most extensive account of a male character turned to stone is that of Phineus himself (5.210-35, the actual metamorphosis constituting the

final four lines), in a scene which readers have recognised as being a parody of the defeat and death of Turnus at the end of the *Aeneid*.³⁵ The mocking connection with Virgil's Turnus makes Ovid's Phineus into an even more despised and degraded character than his defeat alone would justify.³⁶

- 21 Female victims of lithification include several cases where the reader is encouraged to identify emotionally with the victim. In several of these cases, I find this focalisation particularly remarkable because the characters are not the most attractive or sympathetic of Ovid's victims, and yet there is still a strong identification. Such is the case, as I argue extensively elsewhere, for Aglauros, who is turned to stone by Mercury when she attempts to block his courtship of her sister Herse, and who is an unlovable figure with whom there is nonetheless a strong identification in the process of metamorphosis.³⁷ Similar is Niobe, whose lithification is emotively told (at 6.301-12), as well as the Propoetides (10.238-42) and Anaxarete (14.751-8). There are also victimising lithifications in lesser-known cases such as the daughters of Cinyras (turned into temple steps and embroidered in Minerva's tapestry at 6.98-100), and the companions of Ino (4.551-60).³⁸ This last group constitute a kind of double metamorphosis: we first expect a bird-transformation when the women attempt to jump off the cliff, but instead they are immobilised by a briefly extended account of lithification - and then at the end a few of the women are indeed turned into birds (4.561-2). Finally, brief mention should perhaps be made at this point of a rare case of metamorphosis *into* human form - Pygmalion's statue, a textbook case of the objectification of the female body through metamorphosis. As with trees, then, the reader's empathy in stone-metamorphosis is predominantly towards the female characters, together with certain males who are similarly victimised.³⁹
- 22 Another inorganic metamorphic destination, although perhaps retaining a trace of animation in early Greek thought, is water. There is a very strong general connection between water and metamorphosis, in particular with regard to active shape-changers such as Thetis, Nereus, and indeed any sea or river god.⁴⁰ This arises, at least in part, from the formlessness and the movement of water, especially the surface of the sea, with its trackless traces and its deceptive calm turning to destructive storm in a flash.⁴¹ Ovid's poem is awash with metamorphic water-beings, including many rivers which regularly take anthropomorphic and/or personified form as lovers and fathers of humans and humanoids. A few examples are Peneus, father (and transformer) of Daphne; Cephissos, father of Narcissus; Acheron, father of Ascalaphus; Meander, grandfather of Byblis and Caunus. The river Alpheus pursues Arethusa in both anthropomorphic and aquatic form, while Achelous provides Ovid with some delightful metamorphic games when he acts as host to Theseus, a swollen river that stops Theseus' path, and a bull who had lost a horn all at the same time. With none of these river gods, however, can the fluvial form be regarded as metamorphic destination, as such, within the poem. The transformed humans Glaucus and Acis, who become water deities of different forms, discussed below, have the deity rather than the water as their metamorphic destination.⁴² As far as I am aware, there is no male character who becomes water as a metamorphic destination in the poem. The nearest is one of those cases which I describe elsewhere as a 'near miss', that is, a transformation closely associated with the character but not actually a metamorphosis of the person him or herself.⁴³ Such is the case of Marsyas, very much a bodily victim, and with a stream named after him, but not actually turned into water himself. Rather, it is the

sympathetic tears of the satyrs, nymphs, and shepherds, grieved at Marsyas' flaying by Apollo, which turn into water (*Met.* 6.396-400).

- 23 Nymphs are widely associated with pools and springs in the Graeco-Roman thought, mythology, and art.⁴⁴ The erotic description of Salmacis' pool and the emasculating power of her waters are a case in point.⁴⁵ There are several female characters, by contrast, who turn into water as a metamorphic destination. The distinction is clear in the case of Cyane, already a water nymph strongly associated with her pool (5.409-12) before the violence perpetrated on her by Dis, when she attempts to stop his rape of Proserpina (5.413-20). The god of the underworld responds by casting a spear into her pool, which opens his way back down to Tartarus (5.420-4). This symbolic rape, as well as her sympathy for Proserpina, causes Cyane such grief that she is transformed into water.

at Cyane, raptamque deam contemptaque fontis
iura sui maerens, inconsolabile uulnus
mente gerit tacita lacrimisque absumitur omnis
et, quarum fuerat magnum modo numen, in illas
extenuatur aquas. molliri membra uideres,
ossa pati flexus, unguis posuisse rigorem;
primaque de tota tenuissima quaeque liquescent,
caerulei crines digitique et crura pedesque
(nam breuis in gelidas membris exilibus undas
transitus est); post haec umeri tergusque latusque
pectoraque in tenues abeunt euanida riuos;
denique pro uiuo uitiatas sanguine uenas
lympa subit, restatque nihil quod prendere possis.

Met. 5.425-37

But Cyane, grieving about the stolen goddess and the disdained rights of her own spring, bears an inconsolable wound in her silent mind and is completely absorbed by tears and reduced into the very waters of which she had has now been the great godhead. You could see her limbs being softened, her bones suffering flexation, her fingernails having put aside their hardness; whichever parts from the whole were thinnest became liquid first, her blue-green hair and fingers, legs and feet (for the passage into chill waters is short for her thin limbs); after these her shoulders and back and sides and vanishing chest slip away into slight rivulets; finally water in place of living blood flows through her violated veins, and there remains nothing of which you could take hold.

- 24 I quote this passage at length both to show that it is a true and typically Ovidian metamorphosis, not a slippage between the states of a shape shifter, and also as an example of the equally Ovidian emphatic identification with female transformation, especially when associated with victimisation. In case anyone should be in any doubt about the extent of Cyane's metamorphosis, when Ceres comes looking for her daughter, the now-pool Cyane "would have told her everything, if she had not been transformed" (5.465-6). As with many transformed beings, however, she has lost her voice but retains her consciousness, which leads her to communicate with the goddess by signs – she shows Proserpina's (highly symbolically) dropped belt on the surface of her waters (5.468-70).
- 25 A similar metamorphic destination awaits Byblis, whose unrequited incestuous love for her brother causes her to melt into unstoppable tears, tears which the Naiads cause to turn into a spring that never runs dry (9.657-8). Although this might seem to suggest a near miss like that of Marsyas, it is followed immediately by the full transformation of Byblis into the spring which holds her name (9.663-5).⁴⁶ Byblis' metamorphic tears

recall those of Niobe, who is punished for her maternal hybris by the death of all her fourteen children. Stunned by her grief, she is turned to stone, but even this cannot stop her crying and her ultimate metamorphic destination is as both stone and eternal tears (6.303-12). A similar watery outcome awaits the more deserving nymph Egeria, for metamorphosis is often independent of merit. Egeria, wife of the early Roman king Numa, is not remotely comforted for his death by Hippolytus/Virbius' account of his own sufferings.

Non tamen Egeriae luctus aliena leuare
damna ualent, montisque iacens radicibus imis
liquitur in lacrimas, donec pietate dolentis
mota soror Phoebi gelidum de corpore fontem 550
fecit et aeternas artus tenuauit in undas.

Met. 15.547-51

Another's losses, however, were not able to alleviate the grief of Egeria, and lying at the deep roots of the mountain she melts into tears, until the sister of Phoebus, moved by the piety of her grief, made from her body a chill spring and reduced her limbs into eternal waters.

- 26 This is the last female metamorphosis of the poem.
- 27 It is perhaps not entirely surprising that there should be a connection between grieving and turning into water, given slippages between symbolic and literal change in the poem. The one example – and it is not a clear one – of water as metamorphic destination which is not associated with grief is Arethusa.⁴⁷ Part of the same mythic nexus as Cyane, Arethusa is a nymph who undergoes a watery transformation, but maintains the ability to speak and indeed seems more like the anthropomorphic rivers which characterise male water-spirits. After Cyane has given Ceres the sign of Proserpina's belt, Arethusa appears and tells the goddess that she has seen her daughter, as she, Arethusa, travelled through the underworld in her river form from Elis to Sicily. The initial description (all this spoken by the muse who narrates Calliope's winning entry in the competition between the Muses and Pierides) plays with the shared terminology of human body and river, but nonetheless makes Arethusa's anthropomorphic form visually clear.
- Tum caput Eleis Alpheias extulit undis
rorantesque comas a fronte remouit ad aures
atque ait...
- Met.* 5.487-9
- Then the Alpheian girl lifted up her head from her Elean waters and pushed her dripping hair from her forehead behind her ears, and said...

- 28 Later, when Ceres is at peace, having regained her daughter, she hears Arethusa's story: she was yet another of those Ovidian nymphs desired by a divine rapist, in this case the river god Alpheus (from whose name, disturbingly, her introductory epithet derives), in whose waters she happened to be swimming. Arethusa runs away and is followed by a now clearly anthropomorphic Alpheus (5.599-617). Cornered and exhausted, she prays to Diana for help and is hidden in a cloud (5.619-31). Sweating with effort and fear, she is turned into water (*in latices mutor*, 5.636), to the delight of her pursuer, who puts aside his anthropomorphic form and *uertitur in proprias, ut se mihi misceat, undas* ('turned into his own waters, in order to mingle himself with me', 5.638). Diana helps again by opening up a path for Arethusa underground. And there her story stops. The narrative does not make it clear to what extent Alpheus was successful, although the opening epithet perhaps suggests that he was. Nonetheless, Arethusa does maintain her

voice and even speak in defence of her adopted country, to persuade Ceres not to devastate the land.⁴⁸ She may perhaps be regarded, then, as a rare water-metamorphosis who resists total domination, maintaining and even developing her voice after her transformation.

- 29 The final category of metamorphic destination to be presented within this section is one which has very significant differences from all the others considered in this paper, but which must be addressed: apotheosis, or turning into a god. Gods are regularly shape-changers, taking over ('lower') forms at will, but the movement from human to divine form is one reserved for a narrow subset of characters who undergo metamorphosis. The shape-changing river god Achelous sets the scene for the death and deification of Hercules, by telling the story of how he was beaten by that hero in a fight over Deianira, during which Hercules tore off Achelous' horn when the latter was in his bull-form. From there, the narrative segues into the story of Nessus, the centaur who attempted to rape Deianira and was killed by Hercules, only to get his own back by deceiving Deianira into administering a poison robe (*Met.* 9.98-162). A magnificently extended death-scene culminates in the deification of Hercules and his reception among the Olympians (9.163-222).
- 30 As is well-known, deification, the ultimate upward metamorphosis, gains momentum as a narrative motif towards the end of the poem, in a series with Aeneas (*Met.* 14.581-608), Romulus (14.805-28), Aesculapius (brought to Rome as a healing god, 15.626-744, immediately heralding the apotheosis of Caesar), Caesar (15.745-851), and culminating in the contest for supremacy between Augustus and Ovid himself with which the poem ends.⁴⁹ Hercules is an important forerunner of this category of 'heroic apotheosis', as indeed even earlier is the prophecy of Aesculapius' deification by Ocyroe, right back in *Met.* 2.647-8.⁵⁰ It is the only form of metamorphosis in the poem which is empowering.
- 31 It is all too obvious that the gendering of 'heroic apotheosis' is heavily masculine.⁵¹ If we look at the female characters who turn into gods in the poem, or at least achieve some kind of divinisation, the extent of the difference is stark. There are very few women who attain any kind of deification. The only female to attain a place among the great gods is Hersilia, the wife of Romulus, who is enabled to join her husband through the agency of Juno (14.829-51, at the end of book 14).⁵² Otherwise, deified women are among the poem's many victims: I note in particular Io, Callisto, and Ino. Although it might not be possible to claim that their deification is itself victimisation, it is hardly heroic either. In each of the first two cases, it is a secondary transformation after an initial animal-metamorphosis which is highly victimising, while Callisto's case could be regarded as a second victimisation and perhaps not even clearly deification. Io and Ino do both achieve some degree of power in their deified forms. I shall look briefly at each case.
- 32 Io, the first victim of Jupiter's erotic interest in the poem, is turned into a beautiful cow by the king and father of gods, in order to hide her from his suspicious wife. After much suffering, and as a result of Jupiter's deceitful persuasion of Juno (1.734), Io has the very rare honour of a reverse metamorphosis back into human form.⁵³ One thing remains unchanged, however: just as Io was turned originally from a stunningly beautiful woman to an equally attractive cow (1.612), so now she loses all signs of her bovine identity except shining beauty (1.743).⁵⁴ Io's return to human form is short lived, however, as no sooner does she enjoy having only two legs and try out her voice

nervously than the *nymphe* (1.744) becomes *dea* (1.747), worshipped by the rather underdefined but clearly Othered *linigera...turba*.⁵⁵ The transformation of Io into the Egyptian goddess Isis is of course well known in mythology and literature, so this part of the story could be regarded as a given. Be that as it may, Io quickly hands over to her son Epaphus, who even takes over as the subject of *templa tenet* (1.750), before the narrative swerves via the question of divine paternity to his friend Phaethon. She does, however, reappear later in the epic, in her divine form, although introduced with the patronymic that reminds us of her Book 1 story as the daughter of the river Inachus (*Inachis*, 9.687). This is in the story of Iphis and Ianthe, where Io/Isis performs a rare metamorphic act by a female character who has herself undergone metamorphosis, when she solves everyone's problems by changing Iphis from female to male.⁵⁶

- 33 The next female character to undergo some form of apotheosis, and indeed the next victim of the rapacious Jupiter, is Callisto, transformed first by the angry Juno into a bear, in one of the most painful stories of vindictive metamorphosis and its extended aftermath. Fifteen years later, Callisto the bear is 'saved' from being killed by her son-huntsman, when Jupiter transforms the two of them into stars (2.496-507). Catasterisation may be regarded as a form of apotheosis, as it more obviously is for Julius Caesar towards the end of the poem. That is indeed the response of Juno, who complains to Ocean and Tethys that *pro me tenet altera caelum* ('another holds the heavens in my place', 2.513) and persuades them to deny Callisto the possibility of setting into the sea, so that even as a star she remains an outcast.⁵⁷ In this case, then, I think we could reasonably say that Callisto is further victimised by her apparent apotheosis.
- 34 The final example is Ino, again a victim of angry Juno, who takes out her displeasure at Semele, mother of Bacchus, on the latter's relatives, in an extended intertextual engagement with Virgil, in which Juno undertakes a kind of katabasis in order to summon a fury to send Semele's sister Ino and her husband mad. When Ino, holding her baby son Melicertes, leaps off the promontory, Venus (Ino's grandmother, through the goddess's daughter Harmonia, wife of Cadmus) makes an appeal to Neptune for her deification, in a scene which is highly reminiscent of Virgil's Venus' appeals on behalf of Aeneas.⁵⁸ As so often with the *Metamorphoses*, however, this is an intertext which pointedly goes nowhere. Ino is not deified as part of the grand march of Roman history. Indeed, there is no sign of her having any significant power as a goddess, no reference, for example, to her role as Ino-Leucothea in helping Odysseus on his own epic journey (*Od.* 5.333). It is perhaps worth noting that all three of these deified women achieve whatever status they have in the process alongside their sons, Epaphus, Arcas, and Melicertes/Palaemon.
- 35 Not all male characters in the poem who become gods are quite so obviously empowered by their experience as the beneficiaries of heroic apotheosis, however. Three more human men become minor deities, all to a greater or lesser extent associated also with water: Acis, Glaucus, and Hippolytus/Virbius. These characters play out their stories in the interstices of the grand narrative of epic – Homeric, Virgilian, and Roman. Acis is the lover of Galatea, crushed by the jealous Cyclops when he spies the couple together, but miraculously turned into a river god with apparently both aquatic and anthropomorphic forms (*Met.* 13.882-97). The extended episode of Galatea, Acis, and the Cyclops, is, as is well known, a generic and narratological diversion from the journey of Aeneas towards Rome.⁵⁹ The anti-epic tale continues with

Scylla, who has been the audience for Galatea's account, being pursued by the sea god Glaucus, who in the process tells how he was originally a fisherman (so, not only mortal but also lower class) before becoming a kind of fish himself after eating the ancient ancestor of Rowling's gillyweed and being immortalised by Ocean and Tethys (13.906-65). The interplay between erotic pursuit, folktale magic, and normative epic continues into the following book, with Glaucus seeking help from Circe in his pursuit of Scylla. The Homeric witch unfortunately decides that she would like Glaucus for herself and so provides the naïve merman with a supposed love potion, which actually transforms Scylla into the traditional Homeric monster, just in time for us to return to Aeneas' epic voyage – but not before she has been monumentally turned to stone in order to ensure that she does not derail the Roman progress any further (14.72-4). Finally, Hippolytus features as a bizarre throwback to an earlier mythic age, when he attempts – clumsily – to comfort Egeria for the death of her husband the second Roman king Numa, with an account of his death and resultant deification. The story throws us back to the world inhabited by Theseus in books 7 and 8, and to that of Euripidean tragedy.⁶⁰ Its watery connotations arise both from the sea monster sent by Poseidon to terrify Hippolytus' horses, and also in the metamorphosis of Egeria into a pool in response (15.547-51). Although Hippolytus is the least empowered of the poem's males by his deification, since he ends up as much under the control of Diana as he ever was (15.536-46), his story is also interwoven with the greater narrative, not only as a diversion from the onward march of the Roman kings, but also in his brief and elliptical reference to how he came to return to life (15.534-5). This was by the intervention of Aesculapius, also part of Ocyroe's prophecy back in book 2, and also – though Hippolytus does not say this – a contributor to the eventual deification of Aesculapius. I am trying to suggest that these lesser male new divinities, while adding to the huge predominance of males in this form of metamorphic destination, also act as something of a (highly Ovidian) counterpart to the normative beneficiaries of heroic apotheosis.

Animals and birds

- 36 If tales of metamorphosis give physical expression to the widespread ancient notion of the human condition as existing 'between the beasts and the gods', one would expect the category 'animal' to be especially important for the *Metamorphoses*. There are certainly some highly memorable animal-metamorphoses in Ovid's poem, but given the point just mentioned and the prevalence of animals in metamorphic stories from folktale, myth, religion, and modern literature across a wide range of cultures, I find it surprising how relatively rare animals are as metamorphic destinations in the poem, especially as regards terrestrial animals. This phenomenon of the difference between Ovidian metamorphosis-stories and the wider prevalence of animal metamorphoses in many cultures may have some relation to the fact that, in most Ovidian tales, metamorphosis is the endpoint of the narrative rather than the opportunity for further adventures, as it is in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* and in many modern tales.⁶¹
- 37 One kind of animal-metamorphosis which is not really a destination but is important for consideration of the human condition is the shape-changer. Jupiter's pursuit of Europa in the form of a bull is so good it gets in twice, first told by the main narrator in graphic detail at 2.846-3.2, and again briefly but memorably on Arachne's tapestry (6.103-7), where it is followed by a series of similar stories in which first Jupiter and

then other gods take a range of animal, humanoid, and inorganic forms in order to seduce or rape females of various, but inevitably always lower, status.⁶² The human shape-changers who feature in the poem, Mestra and Periclymenus, both owe their transformational ability to Neptune (in keeping with the metamorphic associations of water). Mestra's temporary forms, man, mare, bird, cow, stag (8.853-4 and 872-3), all give her the opportunity to escape from the master to whom she has just been sold and so bring money to feed her ravenous father Erysichthon, but we hear nothing of her fate once Erysichthon has eaten himself (8.875-8). Periclymenus, although he is described by the internal storyteller, his brother Nestor, as able to turn into *formas...omnes* (12.557), becomes only an eagle within the poem and unfortunately is shot by Hercules, thus causing his death when he falls out of the air (12.556-72). Shape-changing is rather more risky for mortals.⁶³

- 38 Transformation into animals, be they terrestrial, aquatic, or aerial, seems to be fairly evenly split between male and female characters.⁶⁴ To take non-birds first, among male characters we have Lycaon to wolf (1.232-9), Actaeon to stag (3.193-9), the sailors to dolphins (3.670-86), the boy who mocks Ceres to lizard (5.451-61), Lyncus to lynx (5.659-60), Cercopes to monkeys (14.91-100), the temporary change of Ulysses' men by Circe (14.277-87; and in reverse at 299-305) – making seven entries. Female characters include Io to cow (1.610-12), Callisto to bear (2.476-88), Ocyroe to horse (2.665-75), Minyeides to bats, although perhaps they should be included with the birds (4.407-15), Arachne to spider (6.139-45), Galanthis to weasel (9.317-23) – making six entries. In addition, there are two couples transformed together: Cadmus and Harmonia to snakes (4.576-603) and Hippomenes and Atalanta to lions (10.698-702). Finally, there is the undifferentiated *rustica turba* on Delos to frogs (6.348-81). In the case of bird-metamorphoses, I have identified the following. Male persons to birds (identification of species and their modern equivalents is notoriously unstable): Cycnus, to swan (2.373-8, 7.378-9, 12.144-5); Ascalaphus to owl, 5.543-50; Tereus to hoopoe, 6.671-4; Nisus to haliaetetus, sea eagle, 8.145-6; Perdix to partridge, 8.251-5; Daedalion to hawk, 11.340-3; Aesacus to some sort of gull (*mergus*), 11.784-6; Picus to woodpecker, 14.388-96; the companions of Diomedes to something that is not swans but like them, 14.497-507⁶⁵ – nine entries. Female persons: Cornix (if that was her name) to crow, 2.568-88; Nyctimene to owl, 2.589-95; Semiramis (not named) to dove (not stated, but implied), 4.47-8; the companions of Ino, 4.543-62, a few of whom were transformed into birds which could be coots⁶⁶ (others petrified); Pierides to magpies, 5.669-76; Philomela to nightingale and Procne to swallow, or the other way round, 6.667-8;⁶⁷ Scylla to 'ciris', 8.147-51; sisters of Meleager, 8.544-6; the daughters of Anius to doves, 13.674 – nine or 10 entries. In addition, there is the couple Ceyx and Alcyone, transformed into the same species of bird (possibly kingfisher) and with an unusual degree of happiness ever after (11.741-2); two couples both transformed into birds very briefly mentioned at 7.384-5 and 7.400. Finally, there is Caenis, who begins life as a female person, is transformed into an impenetrable male, and then – if rather ambiguously – to a bird, *avis unica* (12.525).
- 39 Broadly, then, it seems that these destinations are fairly even as regards gender. Given the substantially gendered nature of the other metamorphic outcomes considered in this paper, perhaps we should ask not why there is so much equality among birds and animals, but rather why there are so few women turned into these creatures, by comparison with other destinations. One possible reason for there being a relatively high number of male characters represented among animals and birds is that, as a

creature of this type, the metamorphosed being maintains a greater capacity for action and, in particular, movement than would be the case for trees, pools, and rocks. Before we abandon all sense of pattern to animal-metamorphoses, however, there is one further small point that I would like to bring to the reader's attention.

- 40 I noted with regard to stones that most of the male victims were non-aristocratic characters, as also was the rare adult male tree. If we look across the range of animals and birds, we do not see any very simple or clear distinctions as regards status, but it may be significant that among the male animals, in particular, there is a relatively high proportion of lower-class characters. The highly memorable first three males to be turned into animals, Lycaon, Actaeon, and Cadmus, are undoubtedly of the aristocratic, heroic mould typical of epic. After that, however, we have the sailors transformed into dolphins by Bacchus, the boy who mocks Ceres for drinking avidly, the inhabitants of Pithecusae who become monkeys, Ulysses' men, and perhaps we might include the Delian *rustica turba* turned into frogs. The only other male characters after Cadmus to be turned into animals are Lycus, a king but *barbarus*, and Hippomenes. The latter could reasonably be considered to belong to the heroic aristocracy, but he, together with Atalanta, is turned into a lion, that most royal of beasts. By contrast, lizard, monkeys, and frogs could certainly be regarded as lowly outcomes for lowly characters, and probably even dolphins. As regards females turned into animals, again the first three (Io, Callisto, and Ocyroe) could be regarded as aristocratic, and certainly Harmonia, daughter of Mars and Venus, but the narrator goes to some trouble to insist on the lower-class status of Arachne, while Galanthis is explicitly a servant. Their destinations, spider and weasel, might also be seen as lowly. The Minyaeides are a strange case: within their wider mythology, they are certainly of royal status, though the only detail we are given within the poem is that they have servants (4.35). Their eventual transformation into bats is perhaps less than heroic (4.410-15). When we turn to true birds, however, the characters both male and female are almost all very much in the heroic mould of epic. The nearest to constituting exceptions to this aristocratic status for those who become birds would be the Pierides, who are clearly substantially lower in status than their opponents, the Muses, and are turned into magpies, hardly the most elevated of birds.
- 41 Although there are many other aspects to the relationship between humans and animals in the *Metamorphoses*, I tentatively suggest that, as my opening epigram says, not everything is equally likely, with continuity of status, as well as gender, having a part to play in metamorphic destination.

Epilogue: thin air

- 42 This paper has been concerned to explore the significance of the kind of outcomes for different groups of those who become victims, or occasionally beneficiaries, of metamorphosis. The only kind of metamorphosis in which men were found to predominate was the upward metamorphosis of apotheosis. I began with a group of women whose transformation into trees emphasised and actualised their inferior and curtailed position within their culture, even while they are still running free. I would like to finish with a brief glance at three women whose metamorphosis goes even further in exploring continuity and loss: Syrinx, Echo, and Canens, all of them

connected in some way with sound and in some sense turned into thin air. And finally, one who never existed.

43 The story of Syrinx is a kind of ironic repeat of the story of Daphne with which I began.

⁶⁸ Here is a nymph who, while escaping from a sexual predator and on reaching the impediment of a riverbank, is turned into a lower form of vegetable life, a reed. Her pursuer, Pan, somehow discovers that the movement of air going through her hollow stalk makes music, which he appropriates as a form of (rather one-sided) conversation with her.⁶⁹ All these elements of reduction and undermining are metapoetically expressed in the outrageous act of self-interruption by the narrator, when at 1.700 Ovid's account of Mercury's account of what Pan said breaks off when the audience falls asleep, the rest of the story told under the guise of not being told.⁷⁰

44 Echo, as is very well known, literally wastes away after she is rejected by Narcissus and ends up as just a voice (*uox manet*, *Met.* 3.399), that voice which had already been reduced to a repetition of others' sounds. In the description of Echo's final transformation at *Met.* 3.396-401, the juice of her body goes away into air until only a voice remains. In the final two lines, bracketed by Tarrant, either Ovid or a perceptive interpolator notes that what remains is *sonus*. Similarly, the nymph Canens, wife of Laurentine Picus (*Met.* 14.336), who is renowned for her extraordinary singing ability (338), wastes away in grief when her husband disappears (he has in fact been transformed by Circe into a woodpecker) and –

luctibus extremum tenues liquefacta medullas

tabuit inque leues paulatim euanuit auras.

Met. 14.431-2.

Finally, dissolved in her delicate marrow, she wasted away and gradually vanished into light breezes.

45 Such, according to the following two lines, is the origin of the Roman Camenae.⁷¹ Should we celebrate the female role in the origin of Latin literature? Or rather, should we acknowledge the effacement of the female personhood on which it is based?

46 And finally, the ultimate effacement of female personhood comes in the story of Aura – the nymph who never existed, even in the most fictional level of the poem, who is transformed (in a sense) into moving breezes only through the imagination of her male lover Cephalus and the final understanding of the reader, alongside the internal addressee Procris.⁷²

47 Perhaps these women who dissipate into thin air could offer a clue to the conclusion of Muske-Dukes' poem, in which the transformed 'Daphne' was

not ready to be chopped into little

sticks & tossed into fire's assumed supremacy—

all that smoke, her ashes refusing to fly.

48 This Daphne is given the opportunity to resist becoming nothing.⁷³

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NOTES

1. Feldherr (2002) gives a good account of this widely accepted point.
2. On aetiology and metamorphosis see Myers (1994).
3. Sharrock (2020).
4. All these points are developed in Sharrock (2020).
5. I shall not explore in any detail the connection between femininity and monstrosity, which has a long history and which is reflected in Ovid's poem in, for example, the story of Scylla, the monster who was once a girl. On this subject, see Carson (1990), Felton (2012), Lowe (2015) 70-8.
6. Buxton (2009) 214-15. There is a brief reference to a dendrological origin for some humans at Virg. *Aen.* 8.315; cf. Lucretius 4.580-9. See Briquel (1992), Hardie (2015) 436.
7. Gowers (2005), Gowers (2011).
8. <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2019/04/01/daphne-after> I have deliberately tried to avoid finding other interpretations of the poem, in order to take advantage of the rare opportunity to respond to a poem without a wider interpretive context. I acknowledge, of course, that this is impossible, as my interpretation is inevitably part of a tradition of reading in general, reading Daphne, and reading classical reception. Commenting on the work of a living poet brings to the fore my beliefs about the role of the reader in the construction of meaning. I am grateful to Carol Muske-Davies for permission to reproduce the poem.
9. Gubar (1981) was a formative influence on me as a feminist critic, exposing the masculinist construction of the female as belonging to the world of created text rather than textual creator. The world has moved on, but for those of us who study ancient poems the risk of objectification remains strong.
10. If one were to change 'Vos' to *uobis*, one could extract a sense something like "the custom for you should not be as a bride", although it is rather tortured. I wondered at first whether *Ars* 2.155-8 might be in the background, when the poet compares behaviour towards legitimate wives and towards those who *non legis iussu lectum uen[istis] in unum*? The presence of *dos* in 2.155 might

perhaps be echoed in the awkward "Vos mos". I think the bad retranslation is a better explanation. An interesting additional twist occurs from something for which I am grateful to Julene Abad Del Vecchio. Jules discovered that the formula 'vos mos non' occurs in a considerable number of fantasy or quasi-historical novels, which use the formula to signify 'you will not'. It seems possible that the authors went word-for-word into Latin in Google Translate (Jules discovered that 'will' is given as one of the possible translations of *mos*), and then created a sentence out of that, no doubt also liking the repetition with its apparent magical sound. Indeed, Google Translate offers 'you will not' as a translation for 'vos mos non' to this day. Muske-Dukes could therefore also be referring to this topos of fantasy literature.

11. See my comment in note 8.

12. I make the comment about 'European mythology', simply because I do not know what kind of symbolism surrounds trees in other mythologies, although I am aware that trees, especially certain types of trees, are sacred in many cultures.

13. Larson (2001) 10-11. See also Buxton (2009) 210-12 and the account of tree-nymphs in the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*, and for the wider role of tree-transformations in children's literature, Jaques (2013).

14. Hofmann-Szantyr (1965) 9. This is also the explanation given by Wackernagel. See Langslow (2009) 439: 'Native to Latin, on the other hand, are the fem. tree-names in -us, like *fāgus*, *ulmus*, and *pōpulus* ('beech', 'elm', 'poplar'). These are inherited, as the Greek fem. φηγός ('oak') shows. This use of the feminine is of interest especially for its parallelism with the corresponding neuter denoting the fruit [...]: [...] we may say that the tree was regarded as the bearer, the fruit as the thing borne.' Corbeill (2015) offers a major advance in the interpretative significance of grammatical gender. Corbeill (2008) discusses ancient grammarians' interest in grammatical gender beyond that of humans.

15. According to Wackernagel, the tree names, together with the small number of other feminine second declension nouns such as *aluus*, *colus*, and *uannus*, are derived from Greek, where there are numerous feminine nouns ending with -os. See Langslow (2009) 440. I would suggest that it would not be difficult to offer a feminising slant also on these words as regards their meaning (translated by Langslow as 'belly, distaff, and winnowing basket').

16. Lotis was transformed into the Lotus tree when fleeing from attempted rape by Priapus (9.346-8). Later, Dryope, who had also been a rape victim, came across the Lotus as she was walking with her baby and plucked a flower from the tree to entertain the child. As a result, she was herself turned into a tree – also a Lotus, unless, like Tarrant (2004), you regard *loton* in the transmitted text of 9.365 as *uix sanum* and propose some other bi-syllabic tree instead, the most plausible being *quercum*, given the association between the name Dryope and the Greek δρῦς ('oak'). The whole story is narrated by the pregnant Iole in response to her grandmother-in-law Alcmena's account of the birth of Hercules, thus making it a context and a story replete with parturition.

17. I discuss this further in Sharrock (forthcoming).

18. In Sharrock (2020) I discuss these stories as part of my argument that the *Metamorphoses* displays a particular affinity with the feminine perspective in the moment of metamorphosis. Frontisi-Ducroux (2003) 86, 91, and 183-5, stresses the peculiarity of Ovid's interest in the moment of metamorphosis rather than in the future effects, by comparison with Greek stories. See also Barchiesi (2020) 19-20. Lada-Richards (2018) 372, in support of her argument for the influence of pantomime acting on the poem in the descriptions of metamorphic processes, notes: "the changes detailed in Ovid's epic do not 'just happen' – they are, on the whole, lengthy, protracted affairs, the chronicling of a wave of movement as it flows through a body's physical articulations." She discusses the potential for choreography also of tree-metamorphosis in Lada-Richards (2016).

19. Dover (1978) 172.

20. Reed (2013) 189 says that this passage is the first attestation of a metamorphosis of Attis into a pine tree, although the connection between the boy and the tree goes back a long way.
21. See Skinner (1997) 133-41, especially for the phallic 'ontological lack' which characterises femininity in much Western thought. See also Corbeill's powerful discussion of ancient constructions of gender as challenged by the figure of the hermaphrodite (2015, especially chapter 5).
22. This kind of shared transformation, which is more often positive than is typical for Ovidian metamorphosis, is noted also in Hardie (2020).
23. See Gowers (2005) on the integration of the couple's metamorphosis with their life.
24. This couple, turned to stone in punishment for Lethaea's boasting of her beauty, feature as a brief simile for the shock endured by Orpheus at the second loss of Eurydice, 10.68-71, following a comparison with someone who was petrified (literally) at the sight of Cerberus. Reed (2013) 180 suggests that there may be a connection with the myth of Hercules, the anonymous unfortunate being perhaps a minion of Eurystheus. As Reed notes, both similes constitute particularly suitable comparisons: Olenus chose to share his wife's metamorphosis, showing a devotion similar to that which motivated Orpheus' journey to the underworld.
25. There is a brief reference to this prehistoric Athenian couple at 7.399-40, incidental to the flight of Medea. According to Antoninus Liberalis 6, Periphas was an early Attic king with whom Zeus was angry because the people were transferring honours due to the god to the king instead. He planned to destroy them both with a thunderbolt, but Apollo, whom Periphas had honoured, persuaded him to commute the sentence to metamorphosis. Note *iustissima* transferred to the wife. Assuming that Antoninus was working with a text Ovid also knew, it is perhaps surprising that our poet did not make use of an unusual detail – the metamorphosis takes place when Zeus enters the royal house and effects the change by pressing heavily on Periphas' back while he is making love to his wife. She then begs to share his metamorphosis. See Forbes Irving (1990) 236-7, who suggests that Boeus is a more likely source than Nicander. In Antoninus, the couple were transformed into different birds, Periphas appropriately into an eagle and Phene, less appropriately, into a vulture, but Ovid makes no mention of the species. See also Kenney (2011) 266.
26. As noted also by Gowers (2005) 334, n.12. Anderson (1972) 391: 'We are to remember the linden and oak at the end of the story, for Ovid does not name the trees into which the couple changed. The linden represents Baucis, the oak Philemon.' Bömer (1977) 197 says there is no doubt, because the linden is more feminine and the oak has more masculine characteristics. He goes on to give examples from Latin literature of where the *tilia* is *mollis* but *quercus* is *dura*, etc.. Hollis (1970) 113: 'the linden, as the slenderer of the two trees...would represent Baucis, and the oak Philemon'. Corbeill (2015) 65 and 89-92 shows how earlier poets (up to and including Virgil) took liberties with the gender of trees for literary purposes. According to his history of Roman poetic practice, it would not have been open to Ovid to use a masculine adjective here – which would have made the identifications explicit. (See also his reading at 99-100 of a possible gender-play at 14.658-9.) Larson (2001), however, several times mentions 'great oaks' as particularly strongly linked to nymphs (see 10-11 and 73-8).
27. That, of course, is not the literal meaning of *circumdata*, of which *quercus* is the passive subject.
28. The grammatical gender, and the difference between the wild and cultivated, is noted by Hardie (2015) 436-7. See also Frécaut (2005), esp. 99-102.
29. See Hardie (2015) 435-6 for the connection with etymological explanations of Italian traditions of dance and music.
30. *Met.* 5.209. The metamorphosis of men into statues has been of considerable interest to scholars in connection with the ancient art-critical aesthetic of deceptive realism. See Hardie (2002) 178-86.

31. In Sharrock (2020), I attempt to make the argument that there is an unfortunate category of "feminisation" via metamorphosis, in which social class also plays a role.
32. Keith (1992) 104.
33. The story is barely told by Ovid. See Hardie (2015) 327-8.
34. Other petrified males include large land masses such as Atlas (also a victim of Perseus), and Haemon (with Rhodope, turned into a mountain in punishment for hybris, 6.87-9, in Minerva's tapestry).
35. Rosati (2009) 159, Hardie (2002) 179.
36. In this account of parodic imitation, I am thinking of Tolkien's description, in the mouth of Fangorn, of orcs as 'made in mockery of elves'.
37. *Met.* 2.738-832. I offer this interpretation in Sharrock (2020) 43.
38. I would include the second metamorphosis of Hecuba, from dog to stone, here, as well as the second metamorphosis of the sea-monster Scylla, whose first metamorphosis has been related with great empathy, into a geological feature, forestalling any damage to the Trojan ships (14.72-4). On transformation into and out of 'stone' (though actually some of the instances considered are not strictly speaking stone), see Stucchi (2012). On animals turned to stone, see Forbes Irving (1990) 299.
39. For full discussion of this argument, see Sharrock (2020).
40. The connections between water and shape-changers has recently been explored extensively by Mawford (2020). More generally, nymphs seem to be strongly associated with water and are often the daughters of river gods, such as the 'tree nymph' Daphne, daughter of the river Peneus (or, in a version not mentioned by Ovid, of the river Ladon in Arcadia). See also Buxton (2009) 174-5, Forbes Irving (1990) 173-4, Frontisi-Ducroux (2003) 23-55, esp. 40.
41. Mawford (2020) 76-81 explores this formlessness and ungraspability of water in connection with shape-changers and wider early Greek thought.
42. An anonymous reader for the journal suggests that I am underplaying the wateriness of the transformed Acis, drawing attention, rightly, to his flowing blood which becomes flowing water. Both Glaucus and Acis end their stories as water gods, certainly, but as minor deities rather than simply pools or streams. As such, they are in contrast with Marsyas, where the metamorphosis is of the mourners' tears, rather than the flayed victim's own blood, despite the way that the narrative encourages us to expect a river flowing from his blood.
43. In fact, almost always *himself*. See Sharrock (2020) 46.
44. See Larson (2001), esp. 8: 'nymphs are above all deities of water'.
45. One of the anonymous readers for the journal hopefully draws attention to an interesting question with regard to Salmacis. Whereas nymphs tend to be relegated to their pool, one might wonder whether Salmacis has left her pool as part of the ambiguously gendered figure which takes the conscious identity of Hermaphroditus. Is she also her pool? The reader wonders whether she is 'just an inert pool after Hermaphroditus leaves', but even if she does leave with him, subsumed into his identity (which at some level does indeed seem to be the case), hers is not an inert pool because it has precisely the emasculating effect for which the story is a *aetion*. There has been much recent work on Salmacis: see Romano (2009), Zajko (2009), Fabre-Serris (2018), Kelly (2020).
46. Kachuck (2020) offers an extensive reading of this episode, with a powerful poetological implication.
47. Ntanou (2020) strikingly reads the Arethusa episode as having positive implications for the female voice.
48. Ntanou (2020) 95.
49. Barchiesi (1997), Hardie (1997), Wheeler (2000) chapter 4. Feeney (1991) 208-10 on the sleight of hand that links Aesculapius and Julius Caesar. Feeney (1991) 206-19 is an excellent discussion of the heroic series, especially regarding the interaction between the deifications of Hercules,

Aeneas, and Romulus, and the senatorial procedure in Augustan times for apotheosis. He makes the interesting point that with most of these deified heroes the entire point of the euhemeristic enterprise – great deeds earning apotheosis – is undermined by the way that the deeds themselves are "oddly muted, with apotheosis being presented as the result of divine power politics" (211).

50. Keith (1992) 63-76.

51. Feeney (1991) makes no mention at all of the female deifications, if indeed they deserve to be called such. He says (206): "the poem's first case of a demigod undergoing apotheosis is Hercules." Taken literally, this is true, since Io wouldn't normally be called a demigod, but I take it as a sign that the female characters who undergo this kind of transformation are not really subjects of apotheosis.

52. Hardie (2015) 473-4. There is no other ancient evidence for the deification of Hersilia. Hardie suggests that the story could have been invented by Ovid, in part to create a parallel between the couples Romulus-Hersilia and Augustus-Livia.

53. See Barchiesi (2005) 228, who draws attention to the contribution of this reverse metamorphosis to Apuleius.

54. 1.612 *bos quoque formosa est*; 1.743 *de boue nil superest formae nisi candor in illa*. Latin allows play between the colour white and the aesthetic judgement.

55. Barchiesi (2005) 228-9 links the adjective to Bacchylides 20.43, as representing Egyptian priests who avoid wool for ritual reasons. He remarks also on the exotic and fantastic character of Graeco-Egyptian culture as seen by the Romans.

56. As I point out in Sharrock (2020) 48-52, metamorphosis of gender shows a very strong preference for movement from female to male. The only other example of transformation caused by a transformed female being, as far as I'm aware, is the infectious tree-metamorphosis of Dryope from Lotis. Of male transformed characters who cause metamorphosis, the vast majority come from the special category of shape-changing gods. One might include Hercules as the agent of Lichas' lithification, but it is not explicit that the transformation is caused by Hercules, only that it takes place after the dying hero has thrown the messenger violently through the air. Moreover, Hercules has not yet undergone his own metamorphosis, which is a pure case of heroic apotheosis.

57. O'Bryhim (1990) considers what is at stake in this denial and argues that it is designed to characterise Callisto as a polluted outcast, replaying the refusal of Diana to let her enter the bath which he regards as being caused by the pollution of her imminent childbirth.

58. *Met.* 4. 531-42. The Virgilian intertexts of the whole episode are well developed by Barchiesi and Rosati (2007) 314.

59. Wheeler (2000) 130-1, 152, Hardie (2015) 371, 478, Ntanou (2020) 88, 90.

60. Hippolytus/Virbius introduces his account at 15.497 with a self-conscious nod, at least on the narrator's part, to the fame of the tragic subject.

61. Not all Ovidian stories end immediately with the transformation, as the ongoing sufferings of Io and Myrrha demonstrate, but the majority do. Even in many of the stories where there is some continuation of the narrative after the moment of metamorphosis, it is often extremely brief. Ceyx and Alcyone would be an example, with their short coda explaining the aetion for halcyon days at the end of a long episode. On the broader issue of human-animal identity and engagement in ancient literature and culture, important is Payne (2010). Riddenhough (1959), explicitly on animal-transformation, is still one of the few scholarly works to focus on metamorphic destination *per se* in Ovid's poem. Frontisi-Ducroux (2003) is valuable also for the human-animal interaction and the wider ancient cultural perceptions of identity and metamorphosis. Lada-Richards (2013) and (2018) concentrate on animal metamorphosis in discussion of a potential interaction with pantomime acting. For one example of scholarship

regarding modern metamorphic literature, beyond the obvious Kafka, see Gymnich and Segão Costa (2006).

62. *Met.* 6.103-26. Jupiter: bull, eagle, swan, satyr, man, gold, fire, shepherd, snake; Neptune: bull, river-god, ram, horse, bird, dolphin; other gods: farmer, hawk, lion, shepherd, grape, horse. By contrast, when the eponymous shape-changer Vertumnus attempts to woo Pomona, all his metamorphic disguises are human, reflecting different professions (14.643-53). He is successful when he appears in his own guise.

63. Feldherr (2010) is one of the few scholarly works to discuss the connection between metamorphosis and social status. He draws (45-6) on the example of Plautus' *Amphitruo* to illustrate how control over shape-changing is strongly predicated on status and argues for the relevance of this more widely in Ovid's poem. See especially 106-12.

64. I have not included tiny references, such as those mentioned in Medea's flight at 7.350ff.

65. Possibly herons, according to Hardie (2015) 429.

66. Barchiesi-Rosati (2007) 317 remark that although it is difficult to identify the species, one would expect there to be some continuity with the previous life of the women as companions of Ino, so there might be an allusion to the simile 'like a coot' to reflect how Ino-Leucothea arises from the sea to help Odysseus (*Od.* 5.337). From my point of view, it is striking that the gaps can be filled by the reader's expectation of continuity.

67. See Wheeler (1999) 52-3.

68. *Met.* 1.689-712. See Barchiesi (2005) 224-5, who also discusses the intertextual background to the story and the invention of the panpipes, through Lucretius and Virgil's *Eclogues*. On this passage, Ovidian metapoetics, and the origins of pastoral, see especially Fabre-Serris (2003).

69. Feldherr (2010) 25: 'the sound of the syrinx comes literally from the voice of the artist, but at the same time the music makes us hear voices. Like Pan, we can hear the nymph's lament in what the poet then pointedly reminds us is simply the sound of the god's own sighs playing through the reeds.'

70. Barchiesi (2005) 226-7, Feldherr (2010) 23.

71. Myers (1994) 109-10 interprets Canens' metamorphosis as being into water (presumably on the basis of line 431), such that the singing nymph becomes the aetion for the spring dedicated to the Camenae near the Porta Capena, the Camenae themselves being originally water nymphs. While I would be open to a watery connection, the text seems to suggest the even less substantial element of air.

72. See Davis (1983) 143-5. Davis speaks of Cephalus as courting the breeze 'with a zeal for personification that is intense', and reflects the fictional creation of the nymph 'Aura', reporting how (145): 'During one of Cephalus' rendezvous with the breeze, an unnamed eavesdropper overhears the hunter calling upon "Aura" and reports to Procris that her husband is having an affair with a nymph.' I am grateful to Eleni Ntanou for discussion of this matter.

73. I am grateful to the editors for their work on this volume and the original conference, and also to Julene Abad Del Vecchio for various elements of help in the production of the paper.

ABSTRACTS

This article explores metamorphic outcomes in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. While the poem may be steeped in constant mutability, for the most part gender emerges as a surprisingly static feature,

and one that carries remarkable weight also when read beside the aftermaths of Ovidian transformations. Though there may be no fixed schema that categorically establishes disparities in the final destinations of male and female transformations, I show that there are significant gendered patterns with some perhaps unexpected consequences for class and social status also. In considering the poem's main destinations, we can see distinct patterns of outcomes: heavily gender-based for trees, gender-significant (albeit not simply determined) for watercourses, gods, and stones, and gender-equal in the case of birds and other animals. The article tackles some of the unconscious gender preconceptions at play, and explores the enduring significance of gender for the *Metamorphoses* within the various outcomes of those who become victims, or occasionally beneficiaries, of Ovidian metamorphosis.

INDEX

Keywords: Ovid; Metamorphoses; metamorphic destinations; gender; gender imbalance; Daphne; transformation (into trees, stones, water, gods, animals, birds, air); apotheosis; victimisation; social class.

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